

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9900

INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 1260

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ECON, HA

SUBJECT: JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER AFTER FOUR YEARS: A SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

REF: P-AU-P A-78 OF MAY 26, 1975

1. IN THE AIRGRAM UNDER REFERENCE, WE HAVE SUBMITTED OUR CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF DUVALIER AS A LEADER AND OF HIS OUTLOOK AND PROSPECTS, AS RELATED TO US POLICY INTERESTS. FOLLOWING ARE SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS OF AIRGRAM.

2. LEADERSHIP STYLE. AS HE ENTERS HIS FIFTH YEAR IN OFFICE, DUVALIER HAS LONG SINCE OUTGROWN HIS "REGENCY" AS WELL AS THE EARLY PRDCTIONS THAT HE WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO DEVELOP INTO A LEADER TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THOUGH STILL OVERBURDENED BY FILIAL PIET TO "PAPA DOC'X" REGIME AND TO SOME DEGREE A CAPTIVE OF THE GOVERNMENTAL APPARATUS HE INGERITED, HE IS INCREASINGLY CONFIDENT IN HIS OWN JUDGEMENT AND HAS DEVELOPED A CERTAIN TASTE FOR AUTHORITY. INNATELY CAUTIONS, HE HAS REDUCED HIS DEPENDENCE ON THE INNER CIRCLE AT THE PALACE AND TAKES ADVISE FROM DIVERSE SOURCES, INCLUDING THE GENERALLY CAPABLE MINISTERS HE HAS APPOINTED. HE IS MAKING ALL THE KEY GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS HIMSELF, AND
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HIS MINISTERS RARELY RELIEVE HIM OF DECISIONS ON MINUTIAE.

HE HAS RECENTLY STRUCK DOWN SERGE FOURCAND, THE MAIN EXCEPTION, WHEN HE FELT THAT THE BRILLIANT BUT MERCURIAL COMMERCE MINISTER HAD BETRAYED HIS TRUST. THUS, WHEREAS HE HAS ESTABLISHED HIMSELF AS THE UNDISPUTED LEADER OF THE GOH, HIGHER MANAGERIAL CONCEPTS AND TECHNIQUES OF MANAGING HIS KEY SUBORDINATES STILL ELUDE HIM, AND HE HAS YET TO BRING FORTH ANY GROUP OF ABLE YOUNGER MEN TO POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. FOLLOW-UP ON DECISIONS REMAINS UNCERTAIN. THOUGH DUVALIER'S PUBLIC STYLE FALLS WELL SHORT OF MAKING HIM A DYNAMIC POPULAR LEADER, HE CONDUCTS HIS OFFICE WITH DIGNITY, TOLERANCE, AND SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE. HE IS BEGINNING TO LEARN THE ARTS OF GETTING OUT AMONG THE PEOPLE, AND IS DRAWING NEW CONFIDENCE FROM THE FRIENDLY RESPONSES WHICH HIS RECENT VISITS TO THE RURAL STRATA HAVE BROUGHT FORTH.

3. GOALS. DUVALIER'S PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES APPEAR TO BE: (A) CONSOLIDATION OF HIS AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY IN A SETTING OF POLITICAL RECONCILIATION, INCLUDING AN INCREASINGLY STRONG DESIRE TO INCUCLATE HIGHER STANDARDS OF PROBITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN HAITI'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. (B) AN "ECONOMIC REVOLUTION" WHICH, THOUGH IT MAY NOT COINCIDE WITH THE STANDARD BLUEPRINTS OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC PLANNERS, IS A GENUINELY FELT CONCEPT OF MODERNIZATION TO WHICH DUVALIER DEVOTES MOST OF HIS DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITY. (C) AN IMPROVED REPUTATION AND IMAGE FOR HAITI IN INTERNATIONAL CIRCLES. IN WORKING TOWARD THESE GOALS, DUVALIER HAS ALREADY PRESIDED OVER SOME MAJOR SUCCESSES, BUT HE FACES SOME PROFOUNDLY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS IN HIS ONWARD COURSE.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS. THE POLITICAL RELAXATION WITH REVELS WITHIN HAITI TODAY, ALONG WITH THE ABSENCE OF PURPOSEFUL OPPOSITION WITHIN THE COUNTRY, REPRESENT REAL ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH WILL BE INCREASINGLY HARD FOR HIM TO PRESERVE AS NEW FORCES DEVELOP WITHIN THE SOCIETY. DUVALIER SEEMS TO BE AWARE OF HIS PROBLEM BUT CONSTRAINED BY HIS HERITAGE AND BY HIS SENSE OF WHAT IS POLITICALLY FEASIBLE FROM MOVING TO ERADICATE ALL THE INJUSTICES PERPETRATED BY HIS FATHER'S REGIME. THE SON MUST BE CREDITED WITH CURBING THE EXCESSES OF THE OLD DUVALIERISTS AT VARIOUS LEVELS, BUT TO DISLODGE THEM FULLY FROM THEIR GAINS WITHOUT SEEMING TO REPUDIATE HIS FATHER IS A DILEMMA HE HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO RESOLVE. HE HAS TAKEN SOME CONSTRUCTIVE FIRST STEPS TOWARD REFORM OF THE GOH'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, BUT THEY

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ARE NO MORE THAN THAT. PARTLY FOR FEAR OF THE POLITICAL RISKS OF A REFORM PROGRAM WHICH MIGHT PROVE TOO DISRUPTIVE, PARTLY PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS OWN CONCEPTUAL LIMITATIONS, HE HAS NOT YET UNDERTAKEN ANY RADICAL CHANGES IN THE DUBIOUS BUDGETARY PRACTICES, THE REGRESSIVE TAX STRUCTURE, THE FRAGMENTED MILITARY SET-UP AND THE OTHER NOTORIOUS LEGACIES HE INHERITED NOR HAS HE REACHED A STAGE OF DIVERTING SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL RESOURCES TOWARD ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM.

5. DUVALIER CAN JUSTIFIABLY TAKE SATISFACTION IN VARIOUS SIGNS

OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS WHICH HAVE RESULTED FROM HAITI'S EMERGENCE FROM ITS SELF-IMPOSED ISOLATION OF THE 1960'S. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY HAS VISIBLY INCREASED IN PORT-AU-PRINCE OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS (THOUGH NOT IN HAITI'S POVERTY-STRICKEN PROVINCES), FOREIGN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN REVIVED AND IS COMING IN FROM MANY SOURCES, AND THE MAIN HIGHWAYS ARE AT LAST BEING RECONSTRUCTED. DUVALIER IS CLEARLY ANXIOUS TO PUSH THIS PROCESS FORWARD; HE DESCRIBES PROJECTS FOR EXPLOITING COPPER RESERVES IN THE NORTH, GEOTHERMAL ENERGY NEAR GONAIVES, OR LIGNITE DEPOSITS NEAR MAISSADE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR CHARCOAL. AS HE PROCEEDS, HOWEVER, THERE IS SOME DOUBT THAT HE UNDERSTANDS FULLY EITHER THE GRAVITY OF THE SHORT-TERM PROBLEMS WHICH NOW BESET THE HAITIAN ECONOMY OR THE INTRACTABILITY OF THE LONGER-TERM PROBLEMS.

6. DUVALIER'S UNDENIABLE PERSONAL GROWTH IN OFFICE HAS NOT YET BROUGHT HIM TO A STAGE WHERE HE IS EFFECTIVELY PUSHING A WELL-THOUGHT-OUT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR HAITI -- ONE THAT INTEGRATES THE TALENTS AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 1260

THE RESOURCES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, STILL ALOOF AND SKEPTICAL.

HE HAS FAILED, SO FAR, TO GIVE THE ECONOMIC PLANNING FUNCTION THE FULL ATTENTION IT REQUIRES, AND ACCOSIONALLY HIS PERSONAL DECISIONS ON SPECIFIC PROJECTS HAVE RUN CONTRARY TO THE DISCIPLINES OF DEVELOPMENTAL PRIORITIES WHICH A COUNTRY LIKE HAITI SHOULD OBSERVE. HE IS UNDULY FASCINATED BY INTRODUCING NEW TECHNOLOGIES INTO HAITI AND WITH THE OUTWARD SYMBOLS OF PROGRESS (PARTICULARLY FOR PORT-AU-PRINCE) AND INSUFFICIENTLY PREOCCUPIED WITH HARD QUESTIONS SUCH AS COST-EFFECTIVENESS, THE FULL MOBILIZATION OF HAITI'S FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT, AND THE STAGNATION OF RURAL AGRICULTURE IN MANY REGIONS. WHILE DUVALIER SHOULD BE CREDITED WITH REVIVING A GENERALLY RECEIPTIVE ATMOSPHERE IN HAITI FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT, HE DOES NOT SEEM TO REALIZE FULLY WHAT IT TAKES TO ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTMENT, AND HIS OWN DECISIONS AND ATTITUDES IN SPECIFIC CASES HAVE ADDED ELEMENTS OF UNCERTAINTY.

7. AS FOR HIS GOALS IN FOREIGN RELATIONS, DUVALIER CAN JUSTIFIABLY TAKE SATIFACTION IN HAVING ACHIEVED A PRODUCTIVE NORMALIZATION OF HAITI'S TIES WITH THE US, WITH OTHER SPECIFIC COUNTRIES, AND WITH THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES. AS THIS PROBLEM RECEDES, HE WILL PROBABLY BECOME MORE AND MORE INTERESTED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPROVING HIS OWN AND HAITI'S STATURE IN THE CARIBBEAN AND IN THE THIRD WORLD GENERALLY. YET HE HAS A LONG WAT TO GO BEFORE HE CAN HOPE TO OVERCOME HAITI'S POOR IMAGE ABROAD, AND HIS PRIDE AND RETICENCE WOULD NOT MAKE HIM AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE OF HIS CASE BEFORE A FOREIGN PUBLIC. IN PRIVATE, HOWEVER, HE SURPRISES VISITORS WITH HIS DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF SPECIFIC ECONOMIC PROJECTS AND HIS COMMITMENT TO NATIONAL RESTORATION.

8. IMPLICATIONS OF US INTERESTS. THE BASIC US INTEREST IN HAITI'S DEVELOPMENT IS CLEARLY BEING SERVED BY THE COMBINATION OF DUVALIER'S "STAYING POWER", HIS SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE, AND HIS GRADUAL PERSONAL GROWTH. THE KIND OF STABILITY HE HAS PROVIDED, SUPERFICIAL THOUGH IT MAY BE, IS AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION FOR PROGRESS IN THE DIFFICULT HAITIAN ENVIRONMENT. IF DUVALIER CAN DEVELOP HIS POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTING ORDERLY CHANGE, CONDITIONS FOR HAITI'S DEVELOPMENT SHOULD IMPROVE SUBSTANTIALLY. PROVIDED HE FEELS SUFFICIENTLY SECURE, IT SHOULD NOT BE BEYOND HIS POWERS TO PROMOTE THE KINDS OF ORGANIZATION, RESOURCE MOBILIZATION, AND RECTIFICATION OF INJUSTICE THAT HAITI NEEDS SO ACUTELY.

9. ON THE OPTIMISTIC SIDE, DUVALIER'S GROWING SELF-CONFIDENCE COULD NAKE HIM INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH ON MATTERS SUCH AS FOREIGN INVESTMENT DISPUTES, DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES, AND LIMITATIONS ON GOH ACTIONS BY INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES -- PARTICULARLY WHEN NATIONALISTIC FACTORS OR FEELINGS PLAY A ROLE. HE CHOULD COME TO LOOK UPON HIMSELF AS THE PRINCIPAL DEFENDER OF HAITI'S LONG-INGRAINED NATIONAL PRIDE. HE CULD COME TO ENJOY

HIS PERSONL DECISION-MAKING ROLE TOO THOROUGHLY, THUS INHIBITING THE GROWTH OF DELEGATED LEADERSHIP AND OF MORE EFFECTIVE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. PARADOXICALLY, HIS VERY SELF-CONFIDENCE COULD LEAD IN TIME TO A SELF-DECEPTIVE, LAISSEZ-FAIRE ATTITUDE ON HIS PART TOWARD HAITI'S PRESSING PROBLEMS, AND THUS TO A SLOW EROSION OF THE HOPES HE IS NOW AROUSING.

10. THUS, DUVALIER WILL HAVE TO ACHIEVE FAR MORE PROFOUND GROWTH AS A LEADER IF HE IS TO STAY AHEAD OF THE FORCES WHICH ARE BOUND TO EMERGE AS HAITI ENTERS INTO MORE COMPLEX PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT.HE HAS MADE A CREDITABLE START, AND HE IS NOT QUITE 24 YEARS OLD. YET PALACES REMAIN PREJUDICIALTO OBJECTIVITY, AND BALANCING FILIAL PIETY WITH REALISTIC APPRAISAL OF ISSUES HAS NEVER BEEN EASY FOR THE SCION OF A DYNASTY.
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